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Abstract

A study designed to examine the accreditation status for the period 1960-69 of all currently operating, small, twelve grade school districts in Texas, and to determine if membership and participation in the Texas Small Schools Project has had an appreciable effect upon such status is reviewed in this document. The card files of the Division of School Accreditation were examined to determine the number of schools which received either clear, advised, or warned recommendations. The search revealed that approximately 67% of all small twelve grade school districts received one or more accreditation visits during the period from September 1960 through May 1969. Statistical summaries and comparisons are presented. It was concluded that Small Schools Project members: have a slightly more favorable accreditation status record; have not received an accreditation discontinuation or tentative discontinuation date after joining the project; and solve their problems more readily. It was also concluded that more valid conclusions might be reached if accreditation visits were made with greater regularity; the Texas Small Schools Project may not affect many of the factors producing accreditation deficiencies; and further study of Project school deficiencies might be warranted in order to discover possible new directions for Project efforts. (SW)

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A STUDY OF THE ACCREDITATION STATUS OF SMALL TWELVE GRADE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1969

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to examine the accreditation status, for the period 1960-1969, of all currently operating, small, twelve grade school districts in Texas, and to determine if membership and participation in the Texas Small Schools Project has had an appreciable effect upon such status.

BACKGROUND

The Texas Small Schools Project, a voluntary, self-improvement program for school districts having fewer than 500 students enrolled in twelve grades, was organized in September 1960, with eighteen pilot schools participating. The Project grew steadily until 116 school districts were participating during the 1968-69 school year, including fifteen of the original eighteen pilot schools. A total of 164 school districts were members at some time during this nine year period. Forty-five schools withdrew throughout those years for the following reasons:

13 - annexation or consolidation

6 - enrollment increase well beyond 500

26 - lack of interest or remoteness from other Project schools

Sixteen schools are entering the Project for the first time during the 1969-70 school year. This increase, however, will be partially offset due to the loss of six schools for the aforementioned reasons.

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A prime prerequisite for admission into the Texas Small Schools Project is a "clear" status with the Division of School Accreditation of the Texas Education Agency. Subsequent accreditation difficulties, however, do not jeopardize membership status in the Project.

NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

The card files of the Division of School Accreditation were examined to determine the number of schools which received either clear, advised, or warned recommendations. The search revealed that approximately 67% of all small twelve grade school districts received one or more accreditation visits during the period from September 1960 through May 1969.

In attempting to establish a basis for comparison between Project schools and non-Project schools, the following considerations were recognized:

1. Only 15 schools presently in the Project participated continuously during the nine year period. Of these, only eight received accreditation visits.
2. The majority of Project schools received accreditation visits either before or after admission to the Project but rarely during both periods.
3. Neither the Project schools list nor the non-Project list remained constant during the nine year period.
4. Many of the 45 schools that withdrew from the Project were members for relatively short periods of time. Some of these received accreditation visits before, during, or after their period of membership.

To aid in eliminating some of the problems of categorization, it was decided to compare only the 116 members of the Small Schools Project in 1968-69 with the 329 small twelve grade school districts listed in the 1968-69 Public School Directory which had never been official members of the Project.

Since one of the purposes of the study was to ascertain the effect of Project membership upon accreditation status, only those Project schools receiving visits <u>after</u> admission were considered. This was deemed advisable due to the fact that no school may enter Project unless it has a clear accreditation status.

Using these criteria, it was found that 42 out of 116 schools on the 1968-69 Small Schools roster were to be considered. Of the 329 schools which had never belonged to the Project, 227 received regulatory visits during the nine year period. Sixteen former Project members, still operating with fewer than 500 students, were omitted from both lists.

Comparisons between the 42 Project schools and the 227 non-Project schools are presented on the following tables with the exception of Table 1, wherein all 116 Project schools are compared as a whole to the 329 non-Project schools. Catergories within each table are mutually exclusive.

STATISTICAL SUMMARIES

TABLE 1

A comparison at the end of the 1968-69 school year, of the accreditation status of 116 Project schools and the 329 small schools which have never belonged to the Project.

STATUS	PROJECT SCHOOLS	NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS
Clear	95.7%	94.2%
Advised	3.4%	2.4%
Warned	.9%	1.5%
Discontinuation date assigned	0%	.6%
Unaccredited	0%	1.2%

TABLE 2

A comparison of accreditation recommendations made as a result of initial visits to 42 Project schools and 227 non-Project small schools during the period 1960-69.

RECOMMENDATION	PROJECT SCHOOLS (42)	NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS (227)
Clear	33.3%	30.3%
Advised	47.7%	50.9%
Warned	19.0%	18.8%

TABLE 3

A comparison of total accreditation recommendations made to 42 Project schools and 227 non-Project schools during the period 1960-69.

RECOMMENDATION	PROJECT SCHOOLS (42)	NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS (227)
Cleared (initially)	18.0%	13.6%
Cleared (subsequently)	29.5%	28.2%
Advised	41.0%	37.6%
Warned	11.5%	16.8%
Discontinuation date assigned	0%	3.0%
Discontinued	0%	0.8%

TABLE 4

A comparison of the number of unfavorable accreditation recommendations per school before clearance during the period 1960-69.

	PROJECT SCHOOLS	NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS
No. of schools receiving unfavorable recommendations on initial visit	23	141
Total number of unfavorable recommendations before clearance	27	240
Mean number of unfavorable recommendations per school before clearance	1.17	1.70

CONCLUSIONS

1. Statistical percentages indicate that in most instances Small Schools Project members have a slightly more favorable accreditation status record than non-Project schools.

2. No Project member has ever received an accreditation discontinuation after joining the Project.

3. No Project member has ever been assigned a tentative discontinuation date after joining the Project.

4. The mean number of visits necessary to clear a school with accreditation difficulties indicates that Project school members are apparently able to solve their problems more readily.

. . . .

5. More valid conclusions might be reached if accreditation visits were made with greater regularity.

6. The Texas Small Schools project, whose programs are designed to upgrade schools chiefly by in-service methods and experimental techniques, may not affect many of the factors producing accreditation deficiencies.

Example: Local financing of the schools and teacher assignments.

7. Further study of Project school deficiencies might be warranted in order to discover possible new directions for Project efforts.